



## County of San Luis Obispo • Public Health Department

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### ***PUBLIC HEALTH MEDIA RELEASE***

*April 29, 2010*

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### **Pertussis (Whooping Cough) Alert**

The San Luis Obispo County Public Health Department is investigating several laboratory confirmed pertussis cases in the community.

Pertussis is a highly contagious respiratory infection that can be fatal to young infants. Symptoms of pertussis in adolescents and adults range from mild to severe. The Public Health Department is urging anyone with the following symptoms to seek attention from a medical provider immediately. Symptoms include cough lasting longer than 2 weeks, increasing in severity, episodes of sudden, severe coughing and vomiting after coughing. Infants who are ill may become pale or dusky blue during a coughing episode and may even stop breathing for a short period of time. Possible complications include pneumonia, seizures, sepsis and encephalopathy.

Exposed susceptible persons (face-to face contact, contact with respiratory, oral or nasal secretions or being in the same room with a pertussis patient greater than 1 hour) should receive preventative medication and follow up with a pertussis containing vaccine to prevent pertussis in the future.

Treatment includes antibiotics and rest, however infants who are ill may require hospitalization. Untreated infected persons remain infectious for several weeks and symptoms can last for up to three months.

Prevention through vaccination is the mainstay of pertussis control. Childhood DTaP vaccine wears off after a period of 6-12 years following the last vaccination leaving adults and adolescents unprotected and susceptible to disease. These people often have undiagnosed or unrecognized pertussis that can be spread to vulnerable populations such as younger unvaccinated siblings, babies or grandparents. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends that adolescents and adults (10-64 years) should be vaccinated with a single Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis (TDaP) containing vaccine (Adacel or Boostrix) including anyone who anticipates having close contact with an infant aged less than 12 months (e.g. parents, grandparents, child care providers and health care workers.)

Adacel and Boostrix are available at the Public Health Department for \$25.00